Public transportation in Farmington Hills is currently provided by SMART—a bus system that serves communities in southeast Oakland County, eastern Wayne County, and Macomb County. Farmington Hills has been a part of the SMART system since 1995 and is located on the western edge of the service area, representing the “end of the line” for several SMART routes.

SMART is funded through a 0.6 mill levy (approximately $2.6 million per year for four years) voted on by all of the communities that are in the transportation system. The Farmington Hills City Council had the choice to “opt out” of SMART and start a separate Farmington Hills system that would allow for transfers to the remaining SMART routes, or stay a part of the SMART system. After extensive study, at its meeting on January 23, the Farmington Hills City Council voted to stay a part of the SMART bus system. The 4 – 3 vote, however, sent a strong message that change is needed.

“The City Council faced the decision of staying with SMART, knowing that the system needs improvement, or opting out and creating an alternate transportation system,” said Mayor Vicki Barnett. “The choice to remain with SMART has prompted a review of the system and a call for greater accountability and more responsible use of taxpayer funds. We are committed to providing public transit in the most cost effective way.”

If voters approve the SMART millage renewal in an August vote, the next four years will provide a time for study and exploration to determine if a larger, more regionalized solution to transit can be established. The City Council will also closely watch how a neighboring community that “opted out” will provide service through other means to those who use public transit.

Not many issues that City Council deals with have such overriding concerns, complex issues, and intergovernmental involvement. City Council deliberations raised a lot of important questions that will get answered over the next few years. The City Council welcomes public input and hopes that open communication will create positive changes in the transportation system in Farmington Hills.

So, stay tuned and let us know what you think.

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**Beautification Commission to honor best landscapes**

Beautification Commissioners will be out this summer looking for the very best landscapes in Farmington Hills. The Farmington Hills Beautification Commission seeks to recognize property owners who invest extra time and effort in improving the appearance of their buildings and grounds. Commercial, industrial and office properties, places of worship, shopping centers, organizations, schools, and subdivision, condominium, and apartment entrances are all eligible to receive awards.

Landscapes will be judged for design, originality, maintenance, and appropriateness to purpose and location.

Participants will be honored at a Beautification Awards Ceremony in the fall, which will include a video presentation of the top landscapes and award winners. If you’d like your landscape considered, contact the Farmington Hills Beautification Commission, c/o Farmington Hills Planning Office, 31555 W. Eleven Mile, Farmington Hills, MI 48336, call Charmaine Ketter-Schmalt at (248) 871-2543, or e-mail chester@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us.

**New Fire Station and Community Center officially dedicated this spring**

This spring, the City’s newest Fire Station and Community Center (located on Grand River one block east of Middlebelt) will be officially dedicated with an Open House and ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new two-story fire station, one of five stations serving Farmington Hills, offers needed additional space for firefighters and their equipment. The Community Center will house after-school youth programs and senior adult, cultural arts, and recreation programs. It will also provide a meeting place for area residents’ and homeowners’ associations.

**Come to the City-wide Open House on May 21**

Come join the fun and learn about the City at the second annual City-wide Open House on Sunday, May 21 from noon to 4 p.m.

The City-wide Open House showcases the Police Department, Fire Department, and other City departments in one big event. Highlights will include:

- Fire engines, police cars, DPW trucks
- Tours of City Hall, Police Headquarters, Fire Station, and 47th District Court
- SWAT, K-9, and fire safety demonstrations
- Moonwalk, games, and prizes
- Information on all kinds of fun City programs for kids, families, and seniors

Mark your calendar! Come early and enjoy “Breakfast with a Firefighter” at 9:30 a.m. with donations going toward Farmington Hills youth programs. For information, call 248-871-2500.

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**Popular FIRST Aid Program**

**Returns March 7, 8, and 11**

The Farmington Hills Citizen Corps Council for Emergency Preparedness (CCCEP) is once again presenting their popular FREE FIRST Aid program. Classes will be offered on Tuesday, March 7 or Wednesday March 8 from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., or Saturday, March 11 from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Counick Center in Farmington Hills. All three sessions will cover the same information.

Participants will learn how to:
- Use the 9-1-1 system
- Perform rescue breathing
- Help someone who is choking
- Control bleeding
- Provide burn first aid
- Use a defibrillator
- Recognize symptoms of a heart attack
- Put together a 72-hour disaster preparedness kit

The CCCEP is sponsoring the program with support from Botsford General Hospital, Community EMS, the Farmington Area Commission on Aging, Farmington Hills Fire Department, Farmington Hills Police Department, and the Farmington Public Safety Department. To register, call 248-473-1800.

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**Our Community Newsletter**

Spring 2006

**Farmington Hills**

City of Farmington Hills
Methamphetamine Test Kit now available at Farmington Hills Police Department

In response to growing methamphetamine use in Michigan, the Police Department has now added a methamphetamine drug testing kit. Recent studies show that 12.3 million Americans age 12 and over (or 5.2% of the country’s population) have tried methamphetamine at least once. Through the Law Enforcement Against Drugs (L.E.A.D.) Program, in-home drug testing kits are available free to Farmington and Farmington Hills residents. Each kit comes with instructions on administering and evaluating the test, and includes drug treatment and referral information. More than residents. Each kit comes with directions on administering and evaluating the test, and includes drug treatment and referral information. Many times your alarm will chirp or beep once if this happens and there are no signs or symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, consult the alarm’s manual. If the alarm still continues to chirp or beep, call the Fire Department using the non-emergency number at 248-871-2600.

If your carbon monoxide detector activates in the alarm mode, exit your home immediately and call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor’s house. If you carbon monoxide detector warns of low levels, open windows and relocate the detector. If the alarm continues to chirp or beep, call the Fire Department using the non-emergency number at 248-871-2600.

To keep your family safe, you should install at least one battery-powered or electric (with battery backup) carbon monoxide detector on every floor and in sleeping areas. Test the device monthly by pressing the test/silence button. Install fuel-burning appliances properly, inspect them annually, and operate them according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Don’t block or seal chimney flues, exhaust flues, or appliance ducts. Don’t leave your car running in an attached garage or in an attached garage or basement, even with the garage door open. Don’t operate gas-powered tools or engines, like generators, outdoors in spaces attached to your home.

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To obtain a free test kit, go to the Farmington Hills Police Department’s Records Section, Monday through Friday. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Police Records at 248-871-2720.

Methamphetamine Test Kit now available at Farmington Hills Police Department

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The L.E.A.D. program offers kits which test for:

- marijuana
- cocaine
- morphine
- ecstasy
- alcohol
- methamphetamine
- a four panel test (marijuana, cocaine, opiates, morphine/heroin)

To obtain a free test kit, go to the Farmington Hills Police Department’s Records Section, Monday through Friday. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Police Records at 248-871-2720.
Art Exhibits

- Blackthorn – Rollicking Irish Music
  - Farmington Players Barn
  - Thursday, March 9, Friday, March 10, and Saturday, March 11 – 7 p.m.

Tickets: $15 adults, $12 senior/students

Farmington Hills Youth Theatre - Alice in Wonderland Musical

- Costick Center Stage
  - Friday, March 31 - 7 p.m.
  - Saturday, April 1 and Sunday April 2 - 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
  - Friday, April 7 - 7 p.m.
  - Saturday, April 8 and Sunday April 9 - 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Tickets: $8 general admission, $6 seniors ($5 +). Advance tickets available or purchase at the door approximately 1/2 hour before performances

2006 Festival of the Arts

- Costick Center – April 26 - 50
  - Friday, April 28 – Art After Dark
  - Saturday, April 29 - Starry Night Gala

Tickets: Available late March

Sunday, April 30 - Family Festival Day (free admission)

The 31st annual Festival of the Arts features activities, displays, and performances. Presented by the Farmington Community Arts Council, the City of Farmington Hills Special Services Department, and the Farmington Public Schools.

MSU Professors of Jazz Concert

- Costick Center – Friday, May 12 - 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: $17 adults, $14 senior/students

The jazz group features talented musicians from Michigan State University.

Spring Senior Activities

- Long days and warmer weather bring the return of spring activities at the Farmington Hills Center for Active Adults at the Costick Center. Adults 50 & Better are invited to stop by and join us for the following fun activities:
  - Dance exercise class with Broadway flair, instructor Jeanette Domol, 6-week series begins March 2, 1 - 2 p.m.
  - $15 for series, $5 drop-in.
  - Daytime ballroom dance lessons, 6-week fox trot series begins March 3, 11 a.m. - noon. $25 for series, $6 drop-ins.
  - Wearin’ o the Green St. Paddy’s Day Party, March 10, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. $7 per person, tickets available until March 6.
  - Downsizing workshop with Theresa Brune of Simplify It, March 14, 10:30 a.m. $5.
  - Legal Matters, learn about elder law and probate, March 22, 11 a.m. $5 with lunch.
  - Movie Mondays, great classics or contemporary blockbusters, March 27 and April 24, 12:30 p.m. $4 includes lunch, movie, and beverage.
  - Emergency Preparedness, for natural, environmental, and physical emergencies, March 28, 10:30 a.m. No fee.
  - Michigan Garden Design, presented by Free Press columnist and MSU Master Gardener, Janet Macunovich, April 4, 10:30 a.m. $5.
  - Project Healthy Living, annual health fair from the Farmington Area Commission on Aging in cooperation with Bossford General Hospital, April 7, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. A variety of no-cost and low-cost tests are available.
  - Adult $6 & Better golf leagues – men, women and couples. Registration is underway. Play begins in May at the Farmington Hills Golf Club.

Evening Programs

- Yoga, wear loose, comfortable clothing. 8-week series begins March 7, 5:30 p.m. $40 residents, $48 non-residents for series.
  - Broadway to Ballroom, 8-week rumba series begins March 7, 7:30 p.m. $40 residents, $48 non-residents for series.
  - Tap Dance, 8-week series begins March 8, 6 p.m. $40 residents, $48 non-residents for series.
  - Sceezch, Flex & Tone, wear loose clothing and bring a mat. 8-week series begins March 9, 5:30 p.m. $40 residents, $48 non-residents for series.
  - Country Western Couples Flow Dancing, two skill levels. Both 8-week series begin March 9, Advanced 6:30 p.m. Beginners 8 p.m. $40 residents, $48 non-residents for series.
  - Vital Woman, current topics for today’s midlife woman. March 15 – Get Organized, What to Keep & How to Store it, March 27 – When to Call a Mechanic and How to Speak “Mechanics.”
  - Change Careers, presented by Heather Ashton, Certified Life Coach.

Cultural arts classes

- Dozens of fun cultural arts classes for kids and adults will be offered this spring. Kids can also sign up for summer art camps. Including Youth Theatre camps. Watch your mailbox for registration information or call 248-475-1857.

Environmental Education

- Earth Day Celebration at Heritage Park
  - Nature Center - April 22, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
  - Topics: How to Create a Backyard Habitat, Rabbit Gardens, Healthy Lawn Care, Earth-friendly Fertilizers, Nature Crafts, Story Time, Clean Water, Native Fish of the Rouge River, Frogs and Toads of the Rouge Watershed, and Recycling. $5 for non-residents. $3 for Critics of Michigan presented by the Howell Nature Center, all other events free. Call 248-871-2860 for info.

- Rouge Rescue 20th Anniversary!
  - The Annual River Day/Rouge Rescue will be held on Saturday, June 3, with work and play activities planned at various Rouge River sites to be announced. This year’s event marks 20 years of efforts to clean and restore the Rouge River and other local waterways. Participants receive a free t-shirt and picnic lunch. To pre-register, call 248-871-2860. For a listing of Rouge Rescue locations in other communities, call the Friends of the Rouge at 313-792-9901.

Detention Pond Workshop

- A Subdivisions built in Farmington Hills since the late 1960’s are required to have a detention pond to store or “detain” storm water runoff. If these detention ponds are neglected, problems such as plant growth and silt build-up can prevent the pond from absorbing water and may lead to flooding in the subdivision. Overgrown ponds can also attract geese and become a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes.

- Proper maintenance of these detention ponds is the responsibility of the homeowners’ association. If you’re a member of a homeowners’ association or a concerned resident, you’ll want to attend the Detention Pond Maintenance Workshop on Wednesday, April 5 at 7 p.m. in City Hall. You’ll learn about:
  - Pond ownership and responsibilities
  - How detention ponds work
  - How to avoid expensive repairs
  - To pre-register, call 248-871-2530.

A Decade of Skating Memories – May 19 & 20

- The Farmington Hills Ice Arena and Figure Skating Club will present the 9th Annual Ice Show, A Decade of Skating Memories, on Friday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m. and on Saturday, May 20 at 4:00 p.m. at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena. The show will feature the Ice Arena’s Learn to Skate students and Figure Skating Club participants. Music by the decades and favorites from past shows will be featured throughout this otherwise unique event – the kids will steal your heart! It’s traditionally a sell-out, so get your tickets early. For ticket information, call the Ice Arena at 248-478-8800 or the Costick Center at 248-473-1800. Tickets will be on sale one month prior to the show at both locations.

Golf Course

- 2006 will represent the Farmington Hills Golf Club’s first full year as an 18-hole golf course. We look forward to seeing you on the links as soon as weather permits!

- If you want to brush up on your skills, the self-serve driving range is located in the heart of the golf course and stays open from 7 p.m. until dark. Mats and grass tees are available. For information, call 248-473-1800.
City Directory

Emergency Calls Only
Fire Department .... 248-871-2400
Police Department .... 248-871-2400
Central Services/Purchasing .... 248-871-2400
City Hall .... 248-871-2400
City Manager’s Office .... 248-871-2500
Assessing .... 248-871-2470
City Clerk .... 248-871-2410
District Court .... 248-871-2900
Farmington Comm. Library .... 248-555-0300
Finance Department .... 248-871-2440
Fire Department
Non emergency .... 248-871-2800
Human Resources .... 248-871-2490
Council Newsletter .... 248-871-2511
Police Department
Non emergency .... 248-871-2600
Public Services Department .... 248-871-2530
Public Works .... 248-871-2580
Planning Department
Planning .... 248-871-2540
Building .... 248-871-2440
Community Development and Housing Rehabilitation .... 248-871-2549
Zoning .... 248-871-2520
Special Services Department
Costick Activities Center .... 248-473-1816
Cultural Arts Division .... 248-473-1856
Ice Arena .... 248-478-8800
Nature Center .... 248-477-1135
Parks & Golf .... 248-426-1505
Recreation .... 248-473-1800
Golf Club .... 248-476-9910
Senior Adult Program .... 248-473-1830
Treasurer’s Office .... 248-871-2480
Volunteer Center .... 248-473-1813
Youth and Families .... 248-871-2481

City Council

Vicki Barnett
Mayor
Ken Massey
Mayor Pro Tem
Nancy Bates
Barry Brickner
Randy Bruce
Jerry Ellis
Cheryl Oliverio

City Manager

Steve Brock
City Clerk
Dana Whinnery
Assistant City Manager
Tere Arbonowski
Assistant to the City Manager

Your Comments

Focus is produced by the City of Farmington Hills and mailed to residents four times a year. Articles are submitted by City department directors. We welcome your comments.

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E-mail: gpines@ci.farmington-hills.mi.us

For the latest information about Farmington Hills, tune into Channel 8.

ELECTION UPDATE

Voters will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 2 to vote on the following:

• Members of the Board of Education (all four-year terms) for the Clarenceville (two members), Farmington (two members), and Walled Lake Consolidated (two members) school districts;
• Millage proposal for the Farmington Public School District.

To be eligible to vote in the May 2 election, you must be registered by Monday, April 3, 2006. You may register to vote at the Farmington Hills City Clerk’s Office, the County Clerk’s Office-Elections Division, or at any Secretary of State’s Office. Absentee voter applications will automatically be mailed out in March to all voters aged 60 or older and to those who asked to be included on our permanent absentee voter list.

To receive an absentee voter ballot application, call the City Clerk’s Office at 248-871-2440 and ask for information about available ballots. You can pick up an employment application at the Human Resources Department or go to the City’s website to print one out.

The eight-week Summer Drop-In Center at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena starts on June 19 and ends on August 11. Check out the Special Services Spring/Summer Brochure for details.

Fundraisers

The Reverse Raffle Dinner Dance, presented in partnership with the Farmington/Farmington Hills Exchange Club, will be held Saturday, April 1 from 6 - 11:00 p.m. at the Farmington Hills Manor. This year’s Come to the Island theme will feature food, dancing, and raffles (big prizes of $500 for 3rd place, $1,000 for 2nd place, and $1,750 for 1st place winners.) If you hold the key that opens the Pirate Treasure Chest you win a weekend at Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island!

Tickets are on sale now for the Rubber Duck Race on Sunday, July 25 in Shawsawnee Park. Call 248-473-1894. Thank you for supporting our fundraisers to help keep the After School Youth Centers available to all our Farmington and Farmington Hills middle school students and to also help support many other youth projects and senior adult programs throughout our communities. If you’d like to help out, call us at 248-473-1841.

Pay property taxes online or by phone

Both phone and online payment services are provided through a third party that charges a 3% convenience fee. Please note that credit cards cannot be accepted at City Hall.

To find out the amount of property tax paid on any parcel, go to www.ci.farmington-hills.mi.us, select property inquiry from the Quick Links menu, and follow the instructions. After you select tax information search, enter a property address, name, or parcel identification number, then select pay now.

To pay by phone, call 1-800-272-9829, follow the voice prompts and use jurisdiction code 3294.

Pay property taxes online or by phone